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UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO  
FACULTY OF MUSIC

## University of Toronto Symphony Orchestra

**David Briskin, conductor**  
**The Gryphon Trio, soloists**

Saturday, October 4, 2008  
7:30 pm. MacMillan Theatre



**08|09 SEASON**

WHERE GREAT MINDS MEET GREAT MUSIC

08-11-2002

# Program

**Rainbow Body (2000)**

**Christopher Theofanidis**  
(b.1967)

**Concerto in C major for Piano, Violin and Cello, Op. 56**

Allegro

Largo

Rondo alla Polacca

**Ludwig van Beethoven**  
(1770-1827)

13'  
35'

THE GRYPHON TRIO  
Annalee Patipatanakoon, violin  
Roman Borys, cello  
Jamie Parker, piano

- INTERMISSION -

**Symphony No. 5 in D minor, Op. 47**

Moderato

Allegretto

Largo

Allegro non troppo

**Dmitri Shostakovich**  
(1906-1975)

50'

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA  
David Briskin, conductor

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# Program Notes

CHRISTOPHER THEOFANIDIS (B.1967)

## **Rainbow Body (2000)**

American composer Christopher Theofanidis conducted the Houston Symphony in the première of *Rainbow Body* in 2000. He subsequently entered the piece in *Masterprize 2003*, competing against more than 1000 entries from 65 countries. Several international juries, together with more than 80,000 members of the public, voted on the winners, following performances by the London Symphony Orchestra under Daniel Harding. *Masterprize* now claims the top prizewinning piece, *Rainbow Body*, as "the world's most performed piece for symphony orchestra written by a living composer."

Christopher Theofanidis writes:

"In the past few years I have been listening to the music of medieval mystic Hildegard von Bingen a great deal. As simple and direct as this music is, I am constantly amazed by its staying power. Hildegard's melodies have very memorable contours which set them apart from other chants of the period. They are wonderfully sensual and set up a very intimate communication with the divine. *Rainbow Body* is based on one of her chants, *Ave Maria, o auctrix vite* ("Hail Mary, source of life"). [The piece is] the coming together of two ideas: my fascination with Hildegard's music and the Tibetan Buddhist idea of 'Rainbow Body,' which is that when an enlightened being dies physically, his or her body is absorbed directly back into the universe as energy, as light. This seemed to me to be the metaphor for Hildegard's music as much as anything.

"*Rainbow Body* begins in an understated, mysterious manner, calling attention to some of the key intervals and motives of the piece. When the primary melody enters for the first time about a minute into the work, I present it very directly in the strings, without accompaniment. In the orchestration, I try to capture a halo around this melody, creating a wet acoustic by emphasizing the lingering reverberations one might hear in an old cathedral. Although the piece is built essentially around fragments of the melody, I also return to the tune in its entirety several times, as a kind of plateau of stability and peace within an otherwise

turbulent environment. *Rainbow Body* has a very different sensibility from the Hildegard chant, with a structure that is dramatic and developmental. I hope that it conveys at least a little of my love for the beauty and grace of her work."

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770-1827)

## **Concerto in C for Violin, Cello and Piano, Op. 56**

If we can believe Anton Schindler, Beethoven's biographer and amanuensis – and few do, since he was given to fabrication – the Triple Concerto was first performed in 1804 at a private concert by Archduke Rudolf, the violinist Ignaz Seidler and cellist Anton Kraft, for whom Haydn had written his demanding D major Concerto. The Archduke, a talented pianist and lifelong patron of Beethoven, became a piano pupil at the age of 15 and, for a while, was the composer's only composition student. The relative technical skills of the three musicians, together with the challenge of balancing the three instruments with orchestra, likely explain why the piano part presents the least difficulties for the performer and the cello is the most demanding. Indeed, the attention Beethoven lavishes on the cello throughout the Triple Concerto offers a tantalising glimpse of what a cello concerto by Beethoven might have resembled – from a composer who was the first to take the cello sonata seriously. The Archduke would appear to have had possession of the score of the Triple Concerto for three years – though, as with most things concerning the early years of the Triple Concerto, information on this point is scanty. After publication in 1807, the first public performance was given in the spring of 1808, in Leipzig, where it was billed as a Concertino. This was followed a month later with another performance, in Vienna.

Beethoven wrote the Triple Concerto in the tradition of the *symphonie concertante*, a genre of virtuoso entertainment popular in Paris in the late 18th century. In his teens, Beethoven had sketched an E minor *Romance* for flute, bassoon, piano and orchestra, but left the work incomplete in 1887. Two years before he began work on the Triple Concerto, he also attempted a D major *Concertante* for the Triple Concerto's combination of instruments, but again left the work in a fragmented form. Both Haydn and Mozart had previously written works with multiple soloists; Mendelssohn, Schumann and Brahms



were among the great composers to contribute to the genre later in the century. Beethoven's Triple Concerto, combining standard piano trio and a typical late Classical orchestra, is an unprecedented combination of instruments and few have risen to the challenge of writing for the combination since. By the time he began composition, Beethoven had already written many trios, including four of the seven piano trios, the Clarinet Trio, two sets of variations and the piano trio arrangement of the Septet, Op. 20. With three symphonies and three piano concertos also completed, he was widely acknowledged as a master of all these respective genres.

Beethoven danced around the title to some extent by labelling his orchestral parts, in French, "Grand concert concertante." But while he addressed the challenges of symphonic writing alongside those of the concerto form in his piano concertos, here he solved the problems of accommodating not one but three soloists primarily by the expansiveness of the outer movements. The brief slow movement, functioning as a prelude to the finale, gives the cello one of its most glorious melodies, which the other instruments then elaborate. The finale is a broad rondo in polonaise rhythm, genial and engaging in spirit and carried easily along by its high spirits.

#### DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH (1906-1975) **Symphony No. 5 in D minor, Op. 47 (1937)**

Art was serious business in the Soviet Union, never more so than under the regime of Joseph Stalin. And no work of art was born of a more chilling marriage of art and politics than was the most famous symphony of the regime's most famous composer. Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony has been more written-about than any other symphony of the Twentieth century. And more political stripes have been projected onto its screen than with any other symphony since symphonies were first written. As he listened to the première of the Fifth by the Leningrad Philharmonic on November 21, 1938, the 31 year-old Dmitri Shostakovich witnessed the most significant turning point in a career riddled with ups and downs.

His roller-coaster ride as a composer began with exhilarating momentum when a precociously brilliant First Symphony won international acclaim for its teenaged composer. Throughout his twenties, success generally followed success. A relatively minor road block, though real enough at the time, occurred when his satirical opera *The Nose* was condemned for "bourgeois decadence"

by the Russian Association of Proletarian Musicians. With his First Piano Concerto, Shostakovich bounced back into favour and a sensational opera, *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, began a hugely popular, two-year run in theatres in both Leningrad and Moscow - at one point, playing simultaneously in three Moscow theatres. Still, after an estimated 175 performances, the audiences who flocked to the opera had evidently got it wrong. In the January 28, 1936 edition of the state newspaper *Pravda*, Shostakovich and the entire artistic community would read a long editorial denouncing the opera. It was headed "Chaos instead of Music" and Stalin's displeasure lay behind its savage denunciation of the composer. Shostakovich, who read the editorial while on a recital tour performing his new Cello Sonata, had slammed into the brick wall of Soviet officialdom.

This was the time of Stalin's Great Terror. As the Moscow show trials proceeded and millions of perceived enemies were arrested, sent to labour camps and often eliminated, Shostakovich spent the next four months completing his Fourth Symphony. This powerful, large-scale work, his most ambitious to date, ends bleakly with a Mahlerian funeral march which would make it an unlikely candidate to appease those who found "leftist bedlam instead of human voice" in *Lady Macbeth*. They would expect more emotional and patriotic appeal and less dissonance from a composer who had been accused of ignoring "the desires and expectations of the Soviet public." Still, the new symphony was given ten rehearsals before uncertainty - and, doubtless, pressure from party bureaucrats - led Shostakovich to withdraw the piece, putting it in the deep freeze for a quarter of a century until 1961, eight years after the death of Stalin.

He began work on his Fifth Symphony four months later, April 18, 1937 and completed it by the Fall. What was at stake was nothing less than survival itself. "The theme of my symphony," Shostakovich declared at the time of its première in Leningrad's Philharmonic Hall, "is the making of a man. I saw man with all his experiences as the centre of the composition, which is lyrical in form from beginning to end. In the finale, the tragically tense impulses of the earlier movements are resolved in optimism and joy of living." Maybe Shostakovich wrote these words to conciliate the party restless; the content offer lots of room for interpretation, make no mention of politics, and could just as easily apply to Beethoven's Fifth or

Ninth symphonies, or Tchaikovsky's Fourth and Fifth. The ovation at the première was long and heartfelt and led one listener to recall the acclaim given less than half a century earlier to the first performance of Tchaikovsky's *Pathétique*. Even under duress, many noted with relief, Shostakovich had managed to give voice to music that spoke unambiguously to both heart and emotions – something, incidentally, he had already begun to focus on in the Cello Sonata before the three attacks on his music in *Pravda*. A journalist reflected relief in the artistic community that Shostakovich had, apparently, managed to navigate a way through a political quagmire by calling the Fifth Symphony “a Soviet artist's creative reply to just criticism.” From the time of its Moscow première, the phrase stuck as a subtitle to the Fifth Symphony. Shostakovich did not coin the phrase, though he would appear to have found it an expedient move not to oppose its use.

The rhetorical opening to the work suggests a symphonic introduction, but its dotted rhythm soon accompanies a spacious but restless melody from the violins. The accompaniment becomes more calming for the comfort of a second theme, a melody that seems born from suffering. But any suggestions of peaceful times ahead are quickly dispelled as the music is whipped up and brutalised into a grotesque, snare-drum-driven march. An uneasy calm settles over the minor-key visionary music of the coda. Shostakovich's clarity of expression continues in the *Allegretto*. This shorter movement picks up on the ironies and distortions of the first movement in a ländler-like homage to Mahler, whose music helped shape the symphonic ambitions of the Russian composer.

At the première, many listeners openly wept during the emotional – and very Russian – slow movement, with its echoes of Russian orthodox

chant and the music of Tchaikovsky and Mahler. This is clearly the emotional core of the symphony and the expression is compelling in its sincerity and passion. The rich eight-part string sonority excludes brass and, after dying away to echoes of the opening from harp and celesta, the movement ends on two solemn major chords.

Introspection goes out of the window as the finale opens in a blaze of brass and another march-like tune, redolent of power. Is the triumph and jubilation with which the symphony ends contrived? And, if so, is this Shostakovich's ironical side responding to the required optimistic resolution to the symphony? Or is it a capitulation to pressure from the likes of the party apparatchiks sent to monitor audience reaction even after the successful première of the symphony? You will find all viewpoints expressed in this the most divisive of movements. But the key that unlocks an answer may lie in an elegiac episode that lies in the middle of all the euphoria. The music here reflects on a short song *Vozrozhdeniye* (“Rebirth”) that Shostakovich had recently written as the first of his *Four Pushkin Romances*, Op. 46. Pushkin's theme in the song is the conflict between art and mediocrity, taking as a metaphor the beauty of a work of art, crassly painted-over by an unfeeling khudozhnik-varvar – or barbarian-painter. Its beauty will return, Pushkin says, as time causes the barbarian's paint to flake away. The music of the song Shostakovich wrote to these sentiments mirrors that of the strutting march that opens and closes the finale. Similarly, the histrionics of the tub-thumping conclusion to Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony cannot erase the beauty of its more introspective moments.

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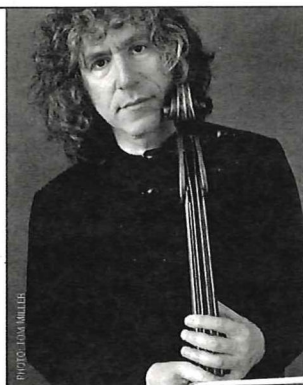
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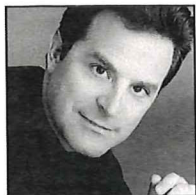
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# Biographies



A conductor renowned for the versatility of his repertoire and the depth of his musical interpretations, **DAVID BRISKIN** has been the Music Director and Principal Conductor of

The National Ballet of Canada since 2006. In July 2008, he was appointed Director of Orchestral Studies at the University of Toronto Faculty of Music and Conductor of the University of Toronto Symphony Orchestra.

Prior to his appointment with the National Ballet, Mr. Briskin served as conductor with American Ballet Theatre for seven years, leading performances at the Metropolitan Opera House, City Center and in major opera houses throughout the world. Mr. Briskin is a regular guest conductor with the New York City Ballet, most recently appearing in Copenhagen. Recently, Mr. Briskin appeared with San Francisco Ballet's New Works Festival, celebrating the company's 75th anniversary and he will join the company again this season in Chicago, New York and San Francisco.

In addition to his work in dance, Mr. Briskin has enjoyed great success on the concert stage. He has conducted the Pittsburgh, Detroit, Baltimore, Indianapolis, Syracuse, Akron, Cincinnati Pops, and Singapore Symphony Orchestras; the Hong Kong Philharmonic, the Juilliard Symphony and the National Symphony Orchestra of Costa Rica where he conducted the Latin American premiere of John Corigliano's monumental First Symphony. Equally at home in the opera house, Mr. Briskin's opera schedule has taken him throughout the U.S., Canada and Europe, including performances of *La Bohème* in Italy; with the Calgary Opera, Manitoba Opera, Opera Carolina, Opera Columbus, New England Conservatory, Sarasota Opera, and Lake George Opera. For six years he served as

the Music Director of the Masterwork Chorus and Orchestra, conducting annual performances of Handel's *Messiah* at Carnegie Hall.

Raised outside of Boston, he attended the Indiana University School of Music and received a Bachelor of Music degree in orchestral conducting from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music and a Master's degree from Queens College, City University of New York.



Celebrating their 15th anniversary season, the **GRYPHON TRIO** continues to delight audiences around the globe. Their celebrated recordings include works by Haydn, Mozart,

Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Dvorak, Lalo, and Shostakovich. With a strong commitment to expanding the piano trio repertoire, the Trio has commissioned and premiered over 40 works. Their 2004 recording, *Canadian Premieres*, features the work of leading Canadian composers and was awarded a Juno. Their most recent recording, *Schubert's Complete Piano Trios*, represents their ninth CD for the Analekta label. As Canada's pre-eminent ensemble, the Trio continues to be actively involved in teaching and nurturing future generations of both classical musicians and audiences. The Gryphon Trio is the Ensemble in Residence at Music Toronto and all three members of the ensemble teach at the University of Toronto's Faculty of Music where Jamie Parker is the *Rupert E. Edwards Chair in Piano Performance*. Strongly dedicated to pushing the boundaries of chamber music, their most ambitious undertaking has been the groundbreaking multimedia production of Christos Hatzis' *Constantinople* which was presented by the Royal Opera House in the Linbury Studio in March 2007.

## UPCOMING U OF T SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA CONCERT

David Briskin, conductor

Bernstein: Overture to *Candide*

Brahms: Violin Concerto in D major (Luri Lee, solo)

Dvorak: Symphony No. 9 "From the New World"

**Friday, November 28, 2008**

7:30 pm. MacMillan Theatre

# Orchestra

## VIOLIN I

Yen-Yu Cheng  
Yen Chia  
Joyce Kim  
James Kruspe  
Luri Lee  
Oriana Leman  
Iain McKay  
Jennifer Melvin  
Takayo Noguchi,  
*concertmaster*  
Eros Tang  
Monica Westerholm  
Jane Yang

## VIOLIN II

Andreea-Madalina Arbone  
Adriana Tascon  
Katherine Avery  
Maia Broido, *principal*  
Matthew Chan  
Chang Chen  
Calvin Cheng  
Madeline Kapp  
Aviva Lufer  
Colin Repas  
Natasha Rollings

## VIOLA

Mohammed Abu Ramadan  
Milo Burstyn  
Luisa Cornacchia  
Egan Gilsenan  
Dongmin Kim, *principal*  
Inhye Park  
Anne Prevost  
Sarah Torrance  
Emma Vachon-Tweney  
Robin Wenglewick  
Elaine Yang

## CELLO

Amahl Arulanandam  
Andrew Ascenzo  
Brenton Chan  
Jason Cho  
Cydney Grogan  
Bryan Holt  
Christopher Hwang, *principal*  
Eriona Jaupi  
Yeun Woo Kim  
Mi So Mok

## DOUBLE BASS

Joshua Bell  
Michael Brough  
John Deshman  
Benjamin Finley  
Jamie Hlusko  
Alexander Kotyk, *principal*  
Calvin Marks  
Samantha McLellan  
Owain Meyer-Macaulay

## FLUTE/PICCOLO

Alberta Brown  
Roseen Giles  
Anna Kolosowski  
Sara Moorhouse

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Candice Barnes  
Victoria Hong  
Laura Roy

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Yoo Jin Cha  
Mark Dimitroff  
Alixandra Haywood  
David Perry

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Rebecca Norman  
Margaret Stephenson

## HORN

William Callaghan  
Elizabeth Lance  
Anna Millan  
Emily Rapson  
James Tizzard

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Marcel Sekine  
Timothy James Watson

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Nathan Fanning  
Nicholas Mahon  
Jolanta Miller

## TUBA

Eric Probst

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Michelle Colton  
Brian Graiser  
Tyler Kerr  
Etienne Levesque  
Andy Luck

## HARP

Marie Bawel  
Rebecca El-Saleh  
Anna Odell

## PIANO

Victor Cheng

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